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Merriam- Webster's Collegiate[®] Dictionary

ELEVENTH
EDITION



Merriam-Webster, Incorporated
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RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY

Second Edition



RANDOM HOUSE
NEW YORK

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traumatic

melancholy: from Latin *atra bilis* 'black bile', translation of Greek *melankholia* 'melancholy', + *-ious*.

traumatic ► adjective (of a medical or surgical procedure) causing minimal tissue injury.

atrazine /'atræzɪn/ ► noun [mass noun] a synthetic compound derived from triazine, used as an agricultural herbicide.

ORIGIN 1960s: blend of **AMINO** and **TRIAZINE**.

tremble ► adjective [predic.] poetic/literary trembling.

atresia /ə'tri:ʒə, -ziə/ ► noun [mass noun] 1 Medicine absence or abnormal narrowing of an opening or passage in the body.

2 Physiology the degeneration of those ovarian follicles which do not ovulate during the menstrual cycle.

ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from *A-* 'without' + Greek *trēsis* 'perforation' + *-ia*.

Atreus /'eɪtrɪəs/ Greek Mythology the son of Pelops and father of Agamemnon and Menelaus. He quarrelled with his brother Thyestes and invited him to a banquet at which he served up the flesh of Thyestes' own children.

atroventricular /'eɪtrɪə(ʊ)'ven'trɪkjʊlə/ ► adjective 1 Anatomy & Physiology relating to the atrial and ventricular chambers of the heart, or the connection or coordination between them.

atrium /'eɪtrɪəm/ ► noun (pl. *atria* /'eɪtrɪə/ or *atriums*) 1 Architecture an open-roofed entrance hall or central court in an ancient Roman house.

2 a central hall or court in a modern building, typically rising through several stories and having a glazed roof. 3 the forecourt of a large church built on the basilican plan.

2 Anatomy each of the two upper cavities of the heart from which blood is passed to the ventricles. The right atrium receives deoxygenated blood from the veins of the body, the left atrium oxygenated blood from the pulmonary vein. Also called **AURICLE**.

DERIVATIVES **atrial** adjective.

ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from Latin.

atrocious ► adjective 1 horrifyingly wicked: atrocious cruelties.

2 of a very poor quality; extremely bad or unpleasant: he attempted an atrocious imitation of my English accent | atrocious weather.

DERIVATIVES **atrociously** adverb, **atrociousness** noun.

ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *atrox*, *atroc-* 'cruel' + *-ious*.

atrocities ► noun (pl. *-ies*) an extremely wicked or cruel act, typically one involving physical violence or injury: a textbook which detailed war atrocities | (mass noun) scenes of hardship and atrocity.

3 humorous a highly unpleasant or distasteful object: atrocities in cheap red nylon.

ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (in the sense 'cruelty'): from French *atrocité* or Latin *atrocitas*, from *atrox*, *atroc-* 'cruel'.

atrophy /'atrəfi/ ► verb (*-ies*, *-ied*) [no obj.] (of body tissue or an organ) waste away, especially as a result of the degeneration of cells, or become vestigial during evolution: the calf muscles will atrophy | [as adj. **atrophied**] in some beetles, the hindwings are atrophied.

4 figurative gradually decline in effectiveness or vigour due to underuse or neglect: the imagination can atrophy from lack of use.

► noun [mass noun] the condition or process of atrophying: gastric atrophy.

DERIVATIVES **atrophic** adjective.

ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from French *atrophier* (verb), *atrophie* (noun), from late Latin *atrophia*, from Greek, 'lack of food', from *a-* 'without' + *trophē* 'food'.

atropine /'atrəpi:n, -ɪn/ ► noun [mass noun] Chemistry a poisonous compound found in deadly nightshade and related plants. It is used in medicine as a muscle relaxant, e.g. in dilating the pupil of the eye.

• An alkaloid; chem. formula: $C_{17}H_{23}NO_3$.

ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: modern Latin *Atropa belladonna* 'deadly nightshade', from **ATROPOS** + *-ine*.

Atropos /'atrəpɒs/ Greek Mythology one of the three Fates.

ORIGIN Greek, literally 'inflexible'.

attaboy ► exclamation an informal expression of encouragement or admiration, typically to a man or boy.

ORIGIN early 20th cent.: probably representing a casual pronunciation of *that's the boy*.

attacca /ə'takə/ ► imperative verb a musical instruction used to indicate that the next section should follow without a pause.

ORIGIN Italian, literally 'attack'.

attach ► verb [with obj.] **fasten; join: he ensured the trailer was securely attached to the minibus.**

1 fasten (a related document) to another: I attach a copy of the memo for your information. 2 include (a condition) as part of an agreement: the Commission can attach appropriate conditions to the operation of the agreement. 3 ascribe (value or importance) to something: he doesn't attach too much importance to fixed ideas. 4 (no obj.) (attach to) (of importance or value) be ascribed to: a good deal of prominence attaches to the central union federations. 5 (attach oneself to) join (someone or something) without being invited: they were all too ready to attach themselves to you for the whole day. 6 (usu. be attached) appoint (someone) for special or temporary duties: I was attached to another working group. 7 Law, archaic seize (a person or property) by legal authority: the Earl Marshal attached Gloucester for high treason.

DERIVATIVES **attachable** adjective.

ORIGIN Middle English (in the sense 'seize by legal authority'): from Old French *atachier* or *estachier* 'fasten, fix', based on an element of Germanic origin related to **STAKE**; compare with **ATTACK**.

attaché /ə'taʃeɪ/ ► noun 1 a person on the staff of an ambassador, typically one having a specialized area of responsibility: naval and air attachés.

2 N. Amer. short for **ATTACHÉ CASE**.

ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from French, literally 'attached', past participle of *attacher*.

attaché case ► noun a small, flat, rigid, rectangular case used for carrying documents.

attached ► adjective 1 joined or fastened to something; please complete the attached form.

2 (of a building or room) adjacent to and typically connected with another building or room: a ground-floor bedroom with a toilet attached.

3 full of affection or fondness: during the journey Mark became increasingly attached to Tara.

4 (predic.) (attached to) (of a person) appointed to (an organization or group) for special or temporary duties: he was attached to Military Intelligence.

5 (of an organization or body) affiliated to (another larger organization or body): a science policy agency attached to the Council of Ministers.

attachment ► noun 1 an extra part or extension that is or may be attached to something to perform a particular function: the processor comes complete with a blender attachment.

2 (mass noun) the condition of being attached to something or someone, in particular:

1 affection, fondness, or sympathy for someone or something: she felt a sentimental attachment to the place where she grew up. 2 (count noun) an affectionate relationship between two people: he formed an attachment with a young widow. 3 Brit. temporary secondment to an organization: the students are placed on attachment to schools for one day a week.

4 (mass noun) the action of attaching something: the case has a loop for attachment to your waist belt.

5 legal seizure of property.

PHRASES **attachment of earnings** English Law payment of debts by direct deduction from the debtor's earnings, under a court order.

ORIGIN late Middle English (in the sense 'arrest for contempt of court'): from Old French *attachement*, from *atachier* 'fasten, fix' (see **ATTACH**).

attack ► verb [with obj.] take aggressive action against (a place or enemy forces) with weapons or armed force, typically in a battle or war: in February the Germans attacked Verdun | [no obj.] the terrorists did not attack again until March.

1 (of a person or animal) act against (someone or something) aggressively in an attempt to injure or kill: a doctor was attacked by two youths. 2 (of a disease, chemical, or insect) act harmfully on: HIV is thought to attack certain cells in the brain. 3 criticize or oppose fiercely and publicly: he attacked the government's defence policy. 4 begin to deal with (a problem or task) in a determined and vigorous way: a plan of action to attack unemployment. 5 (no obj.) make an aggressive or forceful attempt to score a goal or point or gain or exploit an advantage in a game against an opposing team or player: Crystal Palace attacked swiftly down the left | [as adj. **attacking**] Leeds showed some good attacking play. 6 [with obj.] Chess move into or be in a position to capture (an opponent's piece or pawn).

► noun 1 an aggressive and violent act against a person or place: he was killed in an attack on the checkpoint | three classrooms were gutted in the arson attack.

2 (mass noun) destructive action by a disease, chemical, or insect: the tissue is open to attack by fungus. 3 a sudden short bout of an illness or stress: an attack of nausea | an asthma attack. 4 an instance of fierce public criticism or opposition: he launched a stinging attack on the Prime Minister. 5 a determined attempt to tackle a problem or task: an attack on inflation. 6 (mass noun) Music the manner of beginning to play or sing a passage. 7 (mass noun) forceful and decisive style in performing music or another art: the sheer attack of Hendrix's playing. 8 an aggressive attempt to score a goal, win points, or gain or exploit an advantage in a game. 9 the players in a team who are in the position of trying to score a goal or win points: Baxter was recalled to the attack. 10 Chess a threat to capture an opponent's piece or pawn.

PHRASES **under attack** subject to aggressive, violent, or harmful action: the north-western suburbs came under attack in the latest fighting.

ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from French *attaque* (noun), *attaquer* (verb), from Italian *attacco* 'an attack', *attaccare* 'join battle', based on an element of Germanic origin (see **ATTACH**).

attacker ► noun a person or animal that attacks someone or something.

1 (in football and other games) a player whose task is to attack the other side's goal in the attempt to score; a forward.

attagirl ► exclamation an informal expression of encouragement or admiration to a woman or girl.

ORIGIN 1920s: on the pattern of *attaboy*.

attain ► verb [with obj.] succeed in achieving (something that one desires and has worked for): clarify your objectives and ways of attaining them | he attained the rank of Brigadier | human beings can attain happiness.

1 reach (a specified age, size, or amount): dolphins can attain speeds in water which man cannot yet emulate.

DERIVATIVES **attainability** noun, **attainable** adjective, **attainableness** noun.

ORIGIN Middle English (in the senses 'bring to justice' and 'reach (a state)'): from Old French *ateindre*, from Latin *attingere*, from *ad-* 'at, to' + *tangere* 'to touch'.

attainder /ə'teɪndə/ ► noun historical the forfeiture of land and civil rights suffered as a consequence of a sentence of death for treason or felony.

PHRASES **act (or bill) of attainder** an item of legislation inflicting attainder without judicial process.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Anglo-Norman French, variant (used as a noun) of Old French *ateindre* in the sense 'convict, bring to justice' (see **ATTAIN**).

attainment ► noun [mass noun] the action or fact of achieving a goal towards which one has worked: the attainment of corporate aims.

1 (count noun) (often **attainments**) a thing achieved, especially a skill or educational achievement.

attaint ► verb [with obj.] 1 (usu. **be attainted**) historical subject to attainder.

2 archaic affect or infect with disease or corruption.

ORIGIN Middle English (in the sense 'touch, reach, attain'): from obsolete *attaint* (adjective), from Old French *ataint*, *ateint*, past participle of *ateindre* 'bring to justice' (see **ATTAIN**); influenced in meaning by **TAINT**.

Attalid /'atəlɪd/ ► noun a member of a Hellenistic dynasty named after Attalus I (reigned 241–197 BC), which flourished in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

► adjective of or relating to this dynasty.

atap /'atəp/ (also **atap**) ► noun [mass noun] thatch made in SE Asia from palm fronds.

ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from Malay *atap* 'roof, thatch'.

attar /'atə/ (also **otto**) ► noun a fragrant essential oil, typically made from rose petals.

ORIGIN late 17th cent.: via Persian from Arabic *'itr* 'perfume, essence'.

attempt ► verb [with obj.] make an effort to achieve or complete (something, typically a difficult task or action): she attempted a comeback in 1989 | [with infinitive] troops shot civilians who attempted to flee.

1 try to climb to the top of (a mountain): the expedition was the first to attempt Panch Chuli V. 2 archaic try to take (a life): he would not have attempted the life of a friend.

► noun an act of trying to achieve something, typically